



INNOVATION & DESIGN



Animated Words

Motorola isn't alone in developing complex, 3-D animated avatars for mobile phones. At the 2006 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, a newly launched company, 3Dmsg, based in Sunnyvale, Calif., announced that it has developed similar mobile-phone avatars that it plans to have on handsets (hardware and carriers still to be determined) by yearend. This still of a 3Dmsg avatar illustrates the realistic movement of an animated character's lips, which corresponds to words spoken into a mobile phone.

The application strings together a series of visemes, the smallest elements of physical gestures that can be interpreted as having meaning (the visual equivalents of phonemes), which correspond to a speaker's voice and are processed by speech-recognition software. Users can also transform spoken or typed text into an animated greeting -- like a "happy birthday" message -- and send it via a mobile handset as an addition, the company has developed a language-training application using the animated avatars.



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